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Identical letters dated 25 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter (see annex) that represents the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2012/773).

I would highly appreciate if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council before the date of discussion of the report by the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 25 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

- The Syrian Arab Republic would like to reaffirm that it respects Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence. It continues to cooperate with the Lebanese authorities in order to achieve those objectives. It wishes to make the following comments concerning the sixteenth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

- Paragraphs 2, 5, 9, 13, 15, 21 and 34: Syria is disappointed that large parts of the report go beyond the terms of resolution 1559 (2004) by focusing on internal Syrian affairs. Syria rejects the way in which it is persistently targeted for narrow political purposes. There are no procedural, substantive or logical grounds for continuing to make a connection between the details of the internal Syrian crisis and the objectives of resolution 1559 (2004), which is concerned fundamentally with monitoring a specific situation in Lebanon.

- Paragraphs 2, 15 and 47: the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the Syrian Army operations along the Syrian-Lebanese border, to which the report refers, are legitimate in the context of the Syrian authorities' exercise of their territorial sovereignty in order to prevent terrorist infiltration or arms trafficking into Syrian territory. The Lebanese authorities and the report of the Secretary-General itself have established that such activities continue to take place. The Syrian State is entitled to take all of the security and military measures provided for under international conventions in order to prevent the terrorist groups active on Syrian territory from transporting weapons and explosives across the Lebanese border and other borders. The report refers to damage affecting Lebanese civilians and property along the border. That damage was in fact caused by attacks from armed terrorist groups and factions of arms traffickers. The Syrian authorities are prepared to cooperate with the Lebanese authorities to verify the circumstances of the attacks and address their causes.

- Paragraph 5: Syria categorically rejects all of those claims and deplores the report's reference to incorrect media reports mentioning political and security figures in the country. Syria is surprised that the Secretary-General's report on resolution 1559 (2004) has been used as a pretext to circulate spy stories according to a tried and tested method. That approach endangers the credibility and seriousness of the report in an unprecedented manner.

- Paragraphs 10, 13 and 55: Syria reaffirms yet again its position on the delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border: the real obstacle to the final delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border is Israel's continued aggression and its occupation of the Syrian Golan and the Shab'a Farms. Syria hopes that developments inside Syria or Lebanon will not be artificially dragged into the issue. The delineation of borders in the area depends on an end to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories and of the Syrian Golan in accordance with

the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

- Paragraphs 14 and 56: Syria believes that the linkage between the border delineation and the internal situation in Syria is an artificial political manoeuvre aimed at adding to the pressure exercised by certain States against the Syrian State in the context of its current internal crisis. It is not genuinely intended to preserve the integrity of border relations between Syria and Lebanon. At the same time, the Syrian Arab Republic believes that the reference in the report to arms smuggling from Lebanon to "Syrian opposition forces" is a positive development. There is a need to recognize the increase in arms smuggling, which is overseen by the Lebanese member of parliament Uqab Saqr and the Lebanese "Future Movement" to which he belongs.

- Paragraph 16: Syria takes note that the report deplores the occurrence of violations of Lebanon's territorial integrity and the loss of life. However, the report ought also to have deplored the armed attacks on border guards and the police force on the Syrian side. The attacks coincide with the infiltration of terrorists who are funded and armed by certain parties in Lebanon.

- Paragraph 18: the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its position that the real obstacle to the resolution of the Shab'a Farms question is Israel's continued occupation of those Farms and the Syrian Golan, and its refusal to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy. The border cannot be delineated until Israel withdraws from the Shab'a Farms area because it is impossible to delineate the border while that area remains occupied.

- Paragraphs 27, 44 and 53: Syria affirms that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon is governed by Lebanese-Palestinian agreements which do not concern Syria. With respect to the Palestinian positions located along the Syrian-Lebanese border that are noted in the report, we reiterate that all those positions lie within Lebanese territory. From a historical perspective, that Palestinian presence is linked to the ultimate causes of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and other neighbouring States, including Syria. Those causes come down to Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories and its refusal to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which guarantees the Palestine refugees' right to return to the homes from which they were expelled.

- Paragraph 28: the Syrian Arab Republic appreciates the fact that the Lebanese Army has in recent months intercepted trucks containing weapons destined for terrorist groups in Syria. It encourages the Lebanese authorities to continue those operations. Through the Syrian ambassador in Lebanon and the Lebanese ambassador in Damascus, the Syrian Arab Republic has urged the Lebanese side to take all possible measures to prevent the smuggling of weapons into Syria. The report effectively states that arms transfers are taking place into Syrian territory. It goes on, however, to say that the United Nations does not have the means to verify that information independently. Yet paradoxically, in paragraph 5, the report does appear to endorse media accusations regarding the involvement of Syrian officials in the case of the former Lebanese minister Michel Samaha.

- Paragraph 34: the Syrian Arab Republic completely rebuts the claim contained in this paragraph concerning the killing of Hizbullah militants, as well as the idea that they were "involved in the fighting against armed elements of the Syrian opposition". These are mere media reports and have no basis in truth.

- Syria once again calls on the international community to play a constructive role in helping Lebanon to promote its stability and preserve its sovereignty and integrity from a domestic and regional perspective, bringing all Lebanese people together in a national process for the greater good of Lebanon. It again calls on the Security Council to work to end Israel's occupation of the remaining Lebanese territory and its ongoing violations of Lebanese airspace, territory and waters. Syria believes that the realization of stability in Lebanon would have a positive effect on the security and stability of Syria and the entire region.